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REFLECTIONS

FOR

THE NEW YEAR

AN ADDRESS

BY THE REV. D. D. McLEOD, ANCASTER



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ADDRESS.



THIS is a time at which one is naturally inclined to reflect on his past life, to review the way by which he has been led, and to look forward thoughtfully to what may yet be in the future for him. It is like one of those points on the road where you turn out of the way you have been travelling in, and enter on another stage of your journey, and pass through a new and different kind of country. Or, as when one has finished an interesting story and laid down the book, and sits still, thinking over the scenes that have passed before his mind, and follows up in imagination the histories that have been recorded. The first day of the year has generally been held as a holiday, a day for the meeting of friends, and for the exchange of friendly greetings, and in this fact we have testimony to the general feeling that it is a time to pause in the work of life, and meditate and resolve in the light of the past, as to how that work ought to be proceeded with. Now a true Christianity does not interfere with the allowable festivities and friendly greetings of such a season. But it comes in as an honored friend, as it were, and seeks to throw a right influence over them, and bids us not only rejoice in the midst of our happiness, but also reflect; reminds us that one more stage of the journey of life has come to an end, and another—

another, that may be the last—has begun. It is well, therefore, at this time, to hear the voice of this Friend whom we know to be our true friend, and, when our mirth is ended, to listen to His words and to the use He would have us make of the past, and the preparation He would have us make for the future.

Let me, then, point out a few questions which it may be useful for you to consider, and while you read them, seek that the truth may enter your heart. If, on any matter referred to, your conscience should be aroused to blame you, do not seek to quiet conscience by any unworthy excuses; but acknowledge that you are wrong, and seek to silence conscience by a humble confession of your sin, and a prayerful determination to be guilty of that wrong no longer.

And in the first place there are some things which you who are parents, who are responsible for the character of the generation that is to carry on the work of the world, and of the church when your share of it is done—may find it useful to reflect on at such a time as this.

No doubt your parental duties have caused you much anxiety. If you are worthy to be a parent this must be the case. And you have been striving during the past year to lead your family in the right way. You have been anxious, among other things, to guard them from wicked companions, lest they should learn from them any evil ways. But do you remember that you are their principal teachers as to the habits and character they acquire? You are with them daily, your life is before them—what you hide from strangers is known to them, and they cannot but be learning from you,

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learning daily—when you do wrong as well as when you do right. Now, while so anxious they should learn no evil from others, what have you been anxious for them to learn from you? That is a useful question to ask yourself—because if they have not been learning from you at home, from your life, what they ought—if you have been teaching them ways and habits that are injurious and wrong, is it not time to cease doing so, and to begin and set them an example, such as you would like them to follow. So many years mis-spent in doing wrong towards your own family, is it not enough?

Doubtless you did not mean to do them wrong. You have wrought hard for them; you have supported them in comfort; in every way you have done your duty towards them, but in this one matter of example. Now consider of how little use to have done right in everything but this. Is not *this* the main thing. Has not all your teaching been greatly weakened by this one important failure. How much weight will the preaching or counsel of a Minister have with you, if you see him daily contradict his preaching by his conduct. Just so much weight will your teaching have with your children. Might not a child say, Why be so anxious I should attend Church and Sabbath School regularly, while you do not care to go to Church? Why send me there to be taught the very opposite of what I see practised at home? Why teach me to say my prayers, and to pray for you and all my friends, when you do not pray for me—do not pray at all? And just so do children reason in their own minds, and wonder at the inconsistencies of parents. Ah dear friends, the lesson of the life goes deeper than the lesson of the lips. Are we not often rebuked

our children in this matter? Is there not *here* room for improvement in this year we are entering upon? And I beseech you to remember, and reflect on, all the evil it is in the power of parents to do in this way. It would be a useful lesson to turn up and read for the benefit of yourself and family—the second and third chapters of first Samuel, where you see how this one sin—this sin of parental neglect, even in one part of a parent's duty, may lead to fearful results. And this sin, which I wish you to avoid, is one that is far too prevalent in our land at present. Look at the rising generation in our towns and villages, and on our farms also, and are they what we would like to see them? Is there not a sad spirit of impiety prevailing among them? The profanity we hear on the streets, the open disregard of the Sabbath, and of the house of God, the contempt for a parent's authority, the utter want of interest manifested in the work of Christ, the all-absorbing love of pleasure and of the world, these are some of the results that flow from the neglect of parental duty, and these are what we see characterising a large number of the young people in our midst. I know these things are mourned over by many parents, and that you feel your responsibility, and feel your duty as parents most difficult to discharge. But that the responsibility is great, the duty hard, is the very reason why you should strive harder to discharge it aright. It is difficult just because it is so immensely important. But if you persevere in the discharge of it, you will reap abundantly the reward of your efforts. Your patience, your perseverance in instilling truth into the mind, your painful effort to be yourself all you would like your children to be, will come back to you in after years, in the happy reflec-

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tion you have done your duty, and also in the devotion and gratitude of your children, and in the honor and esteem you shall see them held in by their fellow-men. In all this your Heavenly Father will help you. In this good work He works with you, and it cannot be in vain. But while it is your duty to think on your failures in this respect, it is also comforting to reflect on the fact that your children, younger and older, have learned something of good from you—notwithstanding all your short-comings. Some seed that shall bear good fruit in after years has been planted in their hearts, and you may have seen some of the seed you planted in former years beginning to take root, and to bring forth good fruit in their lives. It is encouraging to reflect how much good you may have done for them, and for many who shall come after them, by even one lesson you have taught them, one good principle instilled into them. This good seed sown shall never cease to grow. Long after you are in the grave it shall continue to bring forth good, and your influence for good may thus be felt through many generations. Perhaps you are not able to be of much public service in your own life,—but may not a father or mother be doing more for their country, for their Church and for their Lord, at the fire side among their children, than if they held high office or high station in the land. And so you also may thus be serving in the best way your country and your God. But whatever reflections you may have with regard to the past year, let your resolution be that in every way in which you can as a parent, you will, during this year now entered upon, strive to bring your family under the influence of Christian principles, you will build up the family altar which is broken down, and send forth from your own life, and

from your household, such an influence and such an example as will be for good in the community and in the Church.

Specially consider your duty with regard to family worship, so much neglected among us. The reasons generally given for the neglect of this duty, you know, do not satisfy your conscience. There is no reason why family worship should not be engaged in by every family in the congregation. Consider what a very important means of training your family you neglect in neglecting this. And how unreasonable to say, This, which I acknowledge to be an important means of training my family, which I know to be the great means, under God, of preserving them from a life of Godlessness, is the very means I deliberately refuse to employ. How pleasant a sight it is to see the family collected together morning and evening, for the purpose of acknowledging the mercy of God, and imploring His blessing. How pleasant to hear their united voices praise the God who has surrounded them with so many mercies, who has never forgotten or forsaken them in all their wanderings, in all their times of need, who has daily loaded them with benefits, who has given them life and health and all things so richly to enjoy. Is it not becoming thus to say as a family—On thee, O Lord, we depend? From Thee, our Heavenly Father, cometh down every good and perfect gift? Is it not becoming thus daily to render praise and thanksgiving for the gifts of Providence, and for the gifts of grace—for Christ our Saviour, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin, on whom our hopes of salvation depend? And with our thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God. The doing of *that*, the remembrance that it always was done in your household, will never be a painful

recollection to any of your family in after years, however impatiently they may join in it now. The very remembrance of it, will always tend to strengthen conscience, and to support in the path of duty. Should you begin it this year—then this year will be one long remembered, and remembered with deep satisfaction by you and by your family. In your later years, when you feel that the days are drawing to a close, and that there will be few more new years to you, on your dying bed, as you look back on your family history, and on your conduct as a parent, this year will rise up before you as that one in which, by the grace of God, you were led to do the best thing you ever did for your family—you begun to have worship with them—then you will see and realize more deeply how absolutely important this duty is, and how binding it is upon every Christian parent.

But apart from this relation of parent, there are some things it is useful for us to recall, and reflect on as individuals. Most of you no doubt recognise, in some way, that a special interest attaches to this first day of the year. And this chiefly because this day begins a new date in our history. Another definite measured portion of our life has gone into the past. However we have misused that portion, however we may have sinned throughout it, however we may have neglected the opportunities it brought us, we cannot have it back again. We can do nothing with it now. It is a part of our history forever. We have made it what it is. There, before your mind, there, in the book of God, is what you made of the year 1873. Suppose some one, who had seen you in all your actions, and had recorded all you said and did, were to read it over to you, and sum it all up, the hours well

spent and the hours ill spent, the time given to frivolity and mere worldliness, the time lost and the time wisely used, what kind of a record would it be? Alas! of how much of it would there be cause to be ashamed, how much of it would you wish could be blotted out. How much of it would you desire never to recall again! This reflection, then, that we had that past year to make some thing of for our eternal good, is a most solemn one, and the question, *what* use have we made of it as to the great purpose of life, a most important question.

It brought us much by which our characters might have been enriched, by which our spiritual life might have been advanced. During the course of it we received many lessons, many warnings, many exhortations to make a right use of the day of grace that was passing away from us. So that we ought to be beginning this year wiser and better than when we entered on that year now past. All these lessons and warnings ought to have had their due effect upon us. They were sent with a very special purpose to us, were meant to awaken us to think, to think of other things than mere worldly occupations, to think of eternal things. How hard it is to get men merely to think about these things. Not that these things, death and judgment and eternity, do not come into men's minds. They do. You know how, even in the midst of your work, they have come into your mind, but you did not arrest them there. You did not say, *This* I must really think seriously about; on these subjects I must reflect until I am at rest with regard to them, until I no longer fear death, until I find myself prepared to go before the judgment seat of God, through a true faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. But it is hard to get

men thus seriously to reflect. They are ready to take offence at the minister of the Gospel for pressing these things on their attention. As if these were subjects *they* had not to deal with for themselves. Or as if these were subjects only to be reflected on when the time comes when they can think of nothing else. When, at the approach of death itself, a man is compelled in the midst of his business to lay his work aside, when he is compelled to leave his plough in the midst of the furrow, when he is cast down on his bed so weak and sick, he cannot trouble himself with any worldly matter, then he will try and reflect on these things, then he will look anxiously for the mercy of God, and feel aggrieved if the Lord does not immediately attend to him, and give him peace. He will then seek the minister to speak to him about those things he did not wish to hear him preach about when in health. On the very brink of the grave, in the last short space left to him in this life, in the last few hours of time left out of a long life, he will begin—begin to think—begin to do the work for which his whole life past had been given him—begin to pray—begin to seek salvation—fearing, trembling lest he may not find it—often, alas, not finding it. Are we then, dear friends, beginning this year wiser and better than when we entered on the year now past, or are we, because of our sin, because of our reckless waste of precious opportunities, beginning it weaker, further from God, less disposed to attend to the things of eternity than we ought to be, than we would have been had we used the past wisely? Is this to be another of the many years now past, of the results of which we can only think with sorrow, a year in which, at the close of life, we will not find anything to reflect on with satisfaction? Such it must be, unless we

begin this year in a right spirit. Do not imagine that in pressing a different course of life upon you, from that which you have been following, I am pressing upon you anything that will diminish your happiness, anything that will prevent a true peace of mind, anything that will make you a less desirable companion or friend. No, the aim of Christianity is to give you true and lasting joy, to make you in every respect better, worthier than you can be apart from it. Its aim is to make you happy and useful and worthy of esteem. To be so may make you less agreeable in some companies, may make you, will make you think less of some pleasures you now indulge in ; but what is the worth of that company which will think less of you because you are a better man than you were, what is the value of that companion who will despise you because you refuse to do what you now see to be wrong, and because right principles now rule you instead of the wrong and evil principles that ruled you before? And what are these pleasures worth, which a man desiring sincerely to do right, and obey his Lord, cannot indulge in? Are they pleasures any man ought to indulge in—are they really true pleasures? It is true, that in order to follow Christ you must take up His cross, and His cross has its pain. But it brings pain only because the evil to be crucified is so strong in us, so strong that to have it killed in us, must be hard to the flesh. And to be separated from what we have loved so strongly must be hard to bear. But consider, the pain, the difficulty of giving up all for Christ, of crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, grows daily less. It becomes easier each day to be conformed to Him in all things. It becomes a happiness to serve Him. We soon find the pain of the cross was meant to bring forth

in our heart a true joy, a joy quite different from any before experienced, accompanied as it is with a new sense of peace, and with a bright and heavenly hope. If then your feeling should be, on a review of the past and on looking into your heart, I have not yet made of myself—or have not given myself to my Saviour to make of me—what I ought to be; I am still far from being so happy or so useful as my Lord meant me to be.—If this be your feeling, then let your resolution be: I will give myself over to Him *now*, to make of me a new creature, to make of me what He would. I will seek His pardon for the past, and His spirit to guide me for the time to come. I will ask Him to enable me to understand the high purpose for which He came to redeem me, and to come nearer to it in my life. Beginning the year in this spirit, at the close of it there will be much to look back on with satisfaction. It will appear to you rather like a field well cultivated which has brought forth something of value, something that will enrich you, than a field left uncared for and covered with all manner of useless and hurtful weeds. When old age comes on, or when death draws near, then you will think of *this* year as the beginning of your true life and true happiness. You will think of this part of your journey as no longer downward, among the deadening and unsatisfying objects of mere world's life, no longer downward under a deeper bondage to sin, under the power of merely selfish earthly desires, no longer hellward; but heavenward, along a brighter path, and in a happier spirit, to a glorious destiny, to life everlasting in the paradise of God. And so for you who are true Christians, there is the same beginning again to be made. There is for you the reflection: I will leave behind, with the past year, that

sinful habit, that careless manner of life, that neglect of religious duties which were so great a hindrance to my peace of mind and to my usefulness. I will strive to do more for Christ, be more steadfast and diligent in His service than I have been. I have not yet attained, neither am already perfect, but I will follow after if that I may lay hold of that, for which I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. And is it not a comforting thought, that the Lord permits us to try again, *once* more—we did not reach it then, but we will try again; try now, try, not in our own strength, but with His help? Wherein we came short, He will forgive—and is not *that* the strongest reason for trying not to come short again. Thou, Lord, hast forgiven me. Beginning the year in a spirit like this, in a spirit of true repentance, and in a spirit of earnest endeavour after new obedience, might we not look for the blessing of the Lord upon us? Would it not be the best spirit in which to begin it? Would we not enter on our duty hopefully, and cheerfully, and encounter trial with calmness and courage, if we thus placed ourselves in the keeping of the Lord? Would we not be thus well prepared for whatever may come to us in this year? And this is one great argument to urge to this course, and to urge us to enter on it *now*, this day, namely that something *may* come in this year, to put an end forever to our efforts and opportunities of amendment. Death may come, and if it should will you repent having begun a new life, or having begun to live after a higher example? And it is well to remember that during the past year, death has come into some of your houses. Those of tender years have been taken away from among us, as well as those more advanced in life. While

to many, sickness has come in some form, impressing on our hearts a sense of our weakness, and our liability to be called away from the scene of our labours at any moment. Only the altogether hardened and abandoned sinner refuses to lay these things to heart. These intimations of our mortality are from our God. They are messengers sent in advance of the *last* dread messenger, to arouse us to be ready at his coming. They seem to say, You too are mortal. They are meant to keep us from settling down into a false security, and the message which they bring ought not to be despised. Let these then come in, to enforce what has been said, and let us remember them not merely as we would the exhortations of a fellow creature, but as the warning of our Heavenly Father.

But turning from these reflections, of which perhaps you are weary, let me remind you of what remains to be done by us as a congregation, and as individuals in order to the carrying on of our work. And no doubt we have some reason to look back on the past year with some measure of satisfaction—that is with the satisfaction of a man who has begun a good work, and has successfully got through a part of it, but not thinking that his work is done. I trust also, we have had some pleasure in our work, so that all we have done for the Church, or the cause of God, is work we will always be thankful we were led to do. It was not slavish work. Every one offered willingly what he had to give of his means and labour. And consider that the work you have done is work that shall remain, and be of use and be remembered with gratitude when all your other work is forgotten. Our church shall be a witness of your zeal, and from it shall go forth to many the glad tidings of salvation,

so that we may hope that of many it may be said that you contributed to their salvation. Yes, whether you meant it or not, you were doing so. And consider also, so much has been done not only for yourselves, and for Ancaster, but for the world, and for Christ our Lord. The world must be to some extent the better of our work. And this is a comforting reflection at the close of the year, that—in however small a way, yet to some extent, which our Lord can measure—the world shall yet be the better of my work, of my contribution to the cause of Christ. Whatever I may have left undone, one good work I have been engaged in, and been enabled to do, in aiding to build a church where the gospel may be preached to my fellow-men. Now all this is an encouragement, not to rest, but to go on in the same spirit. If you have reached a higher level of work and usefulness during the past year, can you not keep up to it this year, or even rise higher still. And this new year comes to us with a large amount of work for us to do, and in order to do this there are some duties we must more particularly attend to. We must in the first place try to cultivate a liberal spirit. This is one of those duties you have very often been exhorted to. It is a duty to which it is necessary to turn the attention of professing Christians very often. Because the progress of the Church, not in our case only, but in every case, very much depends on the liberality of the people. And because it is one of those duties that people learn easily to neglect, and one that is directly opposed to the selfish, covetous spirit that has so large a place in the heart of every man by nature. Understand, then, that our success as a congregation, our usefulness, very much depends on your liberality, and let your Christianity be manifest in this, in a protest by

your liberal support of the means of grace among us, and in the world, against that covetous and worldly spirit, which is satisfied with a measure of giving far below what duty demands, and which gives what it does give, not in faith or in love, or cheerfully, but grudgingly and carelessly. Remember the Gospel does not ask from any one more than he can justly give, does not ask for anything merely as a favour, or as if begging for it, but it does ask that the same thought and attention should be directed to this duty, as to any other duty of the Christian life, and that your giving should be as to the Lord and in proportion to your means. Some of you, I fear, look on this as a work of extra merit. As if you were not bound to give anything at all, unless you chose, as if you could be a Christian and give nothing to Christ or His Church. But this is just as necessary a part of Christian duty as prayer, or reading the Bible, or attending ordinances, and should be as regularly and punctually attended to, and no one can rightly believe himself to be a Christian who deliberately and constantly neglects this duty.

But I will not dwell on this duty further, except to say that it has been a source of pleasure and a great encouragement to me to witness your liberality during the past year, and I hope it will not only be kept up, but increased during this year; for although I praise you for what has been done, there is both room and need for improvement in respect to this duty. It would be fatal to our progress if you should think that in this duty you have reached as high a standard as you should aim at. There is not a congregation in our church that might not do far more than it does in the way of supporting the Gospel. In this duty, therefore, as in every other, there should be a higher standard

aimed at in the year we have now entered upon. A little reflection on the matter would be sure to lead to this result. Were you only to consider what you give for religious purposes, and compare it with what you give for all the other purposes of life, consider what proportion it bears to your other expenditure, you would probably be forced to conclude that it bore far too small a proportion, that instead of coming up to the Jewish standard of one-tenth, or to the Christian standard—"as God has prospered you"—it fell very far short of either. Seek, then, to be honest in this matter toward the Lord, and it will be enough if you can say truly, This, Lord, is all I can afford to give as an expression of my gratitude for all Thy good gifts to me and my family during the past year. This which I would pay to a tradesman for one day's work, or one week's work, this which I would spend on one day's pleasure, is all I conscientiously believe I ought to give for the support of the Gospel in a year—all I ought to pay in order to obtain the services of a minister for a year. If you can say that, and feel that it is the truth, then you may be satisfied you are doing your duty in this matter. But in addition to cultivating a liberal spirit, we must, above all things, seek a more prayerful spirit; for however much we may have done in other things during the past year, we have come short in this. And yet this is *the* duty on the right discharge of which our whole success depends, the duty to which we must earnestly apply ourselves, if we would do any good, or obtain any good in the Church of Christ, either as individuals or as a congregation.

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rain from heaven falling upon them, is a picture of what our spiritual life will be, without the blessing of God in answer to earnest prayer. Here, then, is one way in which we all can do much to make our labour fruitful of good, and surely it would be sad to think that all our labour was in vain, because this one duty, essential to its success, was deliberately neglected. Ah, dear friends, will we do everything except ask a blessing from the Lord upon our work? Surely not. Now, this duty seems so manifest that it may appear unnecessary to urge it on you. But I fear it is a duty very much neglected, and that the neglect of it by us is the chief reason why we are so cold and dead as to spiritual things, and why our work during the past year has not resulted in the conversion of sinners, and the reviving of Christian life among you, as it should have done. Some of you, probably, will feel that this work of prayer is one in which you are not inclined to take a part. Wishing every success to the congregation, you still feel that this duty is not, as you would say, in your line. You have never done it, perhaps have never thought of it; perhaps have thought that this is entirely the duty of the minister and elders, and that somehow the Church will prosper well enough without your asking any blessing from God upon it. Now, when you thus put your thoughts and actions in words before you, do they not appear altogether sinful and unreasonable? As if one said, I wish well to the Church, and wish the work of the minister to be of use among us, but not well enough to pray for such a result. Surely that is not a position any reasonable man can take without feeling that it is a wrong position. Ah, dear friends, let no one of us any longer act in that way. Let us take with us words, and

turn to the Lord, and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. Do not think that any one can be exempted from this duty, and if hitherto you have not felt inclined to engage in it, if hitherto you have not seen it to be *your* duty, consider seriously why this has been the case; seek to be delivered from that state of indifference in which you have been living, and begin now, while it is in your power, to lead a more prayerful life, and join your petitions to those of the Lord's people everywhere, that His Kingdom may come, and specially that we, as a portion of His Church, may be blessed to promote His cause in this community.

And now in conclusion. There are many other duties of which I would like to have spoken to you, but for which there is not room in this address. I would only ask that all of you should endeavour to take a deeper interest in the work of the congregation than you have done during the time you have been connected with it in the past. As to what work each person ought to do, this cannot be laid down, but this can be laid down as a principle to direct you, namely,—I can be of use in some way. I am not altogether so insignificant as to be of no account at all. Either I am in the way, a mere dead weight attached to the Church, or I am able to show in some way my interest in the welfare of the congregation, and be helpful in its work. Realizing that, you will soon find out in what particular way you can be of use. And your doing something, and seeing the happy effect of your work, would be a source of real pleasure and satisfaction, would attach you with a much stronger feeling of interest to the congregation, and would have a happy effect on your own life and character. It may be there is

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some neighbour whom you could encourage to attend the church, some child you could bring to the Sabbath School, or some young friend whom you could induce to attend the Bible Class. Or it may be there is some one to whom you could speak a word of loving counsel or warning with regard to the sin he is indulging in, and by which he is bringing ruin upon himself; or some one in difficulty, whom you could help and encourage by a word of sympathy. In such ways as these, something might be done by each of you; and suppose fifty or sixty members of the congregation were acting earnestly in these ways, what a power for good would be brought to bear on the evil that is going on among us, and how much help would be given in bearing the burdens, and fighting the battle of life. I would especially urge on the young people of the congregation to put their hand to the work in some way. You ought not to stand aloof, and leave the work to be carried on by those more advanced in life. Unless our church, and every church, is to go down altogether, you must come forward and take hold of the work. It will soon be altogether in your hands, if it is to be carried on at all. Then why not come forward now? Do not let the world, and the things of it, get all your attention, and put off caring for the things of Christ until you have spent all your vigour upon its pleasures and occupations. You ought to be the chief strength and support of the congregation, and the chief workers in it. It is young people we require for teachers in the Sabbath School, and for the work of the various offices in the congregation. And yet many of you do nothing whatever to show your interest in the congregation. You never inquire how the church is kept up, nor who is doing the work, nor if there is any need

of help in any department. I know, indeed, that all of you are interested in the congregation. But it would be little satisfaction to the army that was engaged in the battle to know that a large party of able-bodied young men were looking on greatly interested in the exertions they were making in the fight. Would you not feel it your duty in such a case to step forward into the ranks and strike a blow for your friends. Would not that be the only sensible way in which to show your interest? What would be the worth of any interest you might feel, that came short of that? Do not think I forget your work in helping to build the church? You did nobly in that, and in the hard work connected with our tea meeting you did nobly; but we must not keep in our enthusiasm, only to let it break out on occasions like these. The spirit you showed then, I wish you to show the whole year through. I wish you to show yourselves as willing to help, and as able to help, in building up the congregation, and helping forward the cause of Christ, as you were in building the church, and to show it in a practical way. I do not need to point out that way. You know how you can hinder our work, how you can discourage your minister, how you can distress the people of God, how you can set before others an evil example, and you know how you can do the opposite of all that, and be a great strength and encouragement in all our work, and this I trust you will resolve to be. We are entering on a year of hard work as a congregation, but it is not a work that is too hard for us. We can easily do all that is to be done, if we are willing to do it. At the same time, it will require labour and the earnest co-operation of all; and I trust that in this labour you

who are young and active will cheerfully do your share. It ought to be a source of satisfaction to us all, that we have a work to do for our Lord. It ought to keep us from being so worldly ; it ought to keep us more alive to spiritual things ; it ought to make us more interested in the progress of His cause in other places ; it ought to make us think more highly of our privileges. Instead, therefore, of looking forward to it in a spirit of fear, we ought to enter on it with hope and courage, remembering that if the Lord is with us in it we cannot fail. And while we have set up our Ebenezer at the close of the past year, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us ; let us enter on the year now beginning in a spirit of faith in Him who has been with us in the past, and in view of all that past, and of the eternity before us, resolve anew with our whole hearts,—As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

And now, dear friends, I trust you will give earnest heed to these things I have brought before you. I have not written, perhaps, in a manner to interest you, but I am sure your own consciences will bear witness that much of what I have written is true, and applicable to your case, and deserves your consideration.

You find enough of reading to amuse you in other writings that are often in your hands ; here I wish you specially to find something that will profit you. I ask you, therefore, as a mark of your regard for me, carefully to read and reflect on this address. I ask you to pray that God may bless it to you, to lead you to repentance, and to seek rest for your soul in Jesus Christ, if you have not already done so. I have sought to show my affection for you, by speaking the truth to you, as to your duties, in as plain and faith-

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ful a way as I could. And now as you are about to enter on the labours and trials of another year, as you go out to meet its temptations, as you take up again the good fight, praying earnestly that you may enjoy throughout the year every temporal and spiritual blessing, I commend you unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

